

## Short Notes.

---

### A Swarm of Butterflies in Sarawak.

On January 12th ult. a great flight of butterflies was observed at Kuching, Sarawak, at 1.30 p.m. All the individuals of the swarm belonged to the well-known species, *Cirrochroa bajadeta*, Moore (syn. *ravana*, Moore); in the male the wings on the upper side are bright chestnut in colour with the outer margins of the fore wings broadly, of the hind wings narrowly, fuscous, the under side is pale brown with darker markings and an oblique pale fascia; the female differs in small details only. A bright westerly wind was blowing at the time and the butterflies flew before it all over the town of Kuching towards Mount Matang in a continuous flood for about 15 minutes whilst stragglers followed up in ever-decreasing numbers for the rest of the day. The colour of the insects, their prodigious numbers and their weak and wavering flight produced an effect that irresistibly reminded the beholder of a heavy shower of falling leaves on a gusty autumn day in England. The swarm or some part of it arrived at Mt. Matang towards evening and streamed up to the summit. At Sadong the same phenomenon was witnessed at the same time on the same day as in Kuching but whether this was a separate swarm or merely one of enormous size sweeping over the whole area between Sadong and Kuching it is impossible to say as I can get no records from intermediate places. On the 13th between 1.30 and 2 p.m. another flighting was noticed in Kuching, but the number were infinitesimal compared to those flying on the 12th, and they did not attract the attention of many observers. Of 18 specimens captured on the 12th, 13 proved on examination to be males, whilst only 5 were females; at the present time of writing—a month after the swarm was observed—this species is quite the most common met with in and around Kuching, but now nearly all the specimens captured are females. The rainfall of the N. E. monsoon months has so far (October—January) been below the average (39.45 inches as

against the average 75.17 inches) and to this comparative drought perhaps may be indirectly attributed the abnormal numbers of this butterfly—*Cirrochroa bajadeta*. That the monsoon has been an exceptionally favourable one for insects is shewn also by the following occurrences:—(1) The number of swarms of social wasps and bees has been greater than usual during the past 3 months. (2) Captain A. Balsler of the s.s. "Rajah of Sarawak" reports that on the 20th January ult., a swarm of dragon flies came aboard his ship when about 50 miles west of the island of St. Pierre; the wind was very unsteady at the time; the insects appeared to be making their way North. (3) Mr. H. B. Crocker, officer-in-charge at Paku, Upper Sarawak, informs me that on January 27th ult., he noticed a swarm of some Pierine butterflies (species not identified, probably *Catopsilia crocale*, Cram.) flying in a solid phalanx some 20 fathoms long by 8 fathoms wide in a westerly direction.

*R. Shelford.*

### Work on Sakais by Messrs. Skeat and Blagden.

In a letter from Mr. Blagden lately received he states that the important work on the wild tribes of the Malay peninsula by Mr. W. D. Skeat and himself will shortly be out. It is an attempt to combine in one work all that is of any permanent value in previous publications both books and periodicals, as well as Mr. Skeat's own independently collected matter collected during the Cambridge Exploring Expedition, in the Northern States of the Peninsula and in Selangor, Mr. Blagden's own notes, and the various information collected by Mr. D. F. A. Hervey, Hugh Clifford, Vaughan Stevens and others. The book which will be well illustrated will be found to be as complete as it is possible to make it, and should prove of the greatest interest to all Europeans in the Malay peninsula. It is unnecessary to point out that in many cases the language and customs of these most interesting tribes are gradually disappearing so that a good record of them is of the greatest importance, and the names of the authors are a guarantee of the excellence of the work.

*H. N. R.*